

Sila Responds to Us: Ecological Grief, Relational Rupture, and Inuit Climate Mental Health

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Research Article

Keywords: ecological grief, Inuit mental health, Greenland, Sila, relational rupture

Posted Date: October 16th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-11166840/v1>

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Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

How does climate-related grief exceed explanations located primarily within individuals? This interpretive synthesis reads Inuit climate mental health scholarship through two linked concepts: relational rupture, the disruption of relations that sustain wellness, and psychocentric translation, the rendering of that disruption primarily as individual psychological outcomes. Predominantly Canadian Inuit literature is placed in dialogue with a situated Nuuk case drawn from two extended interviews with an Inuit woman, supplemented by contextual conversations. The case uses reconstructed field notes and recollection, not transcript-verified quotations. The synthesis connects climate-related distress to land access, mobility, cultural practice, governance, and intergenerational continuity. In the Nuuk account, prolonged drizzle occupies time formerly associated with winter, discourages outdoor activity, and acquires different meanings across generational memories. These observations suggest seasonal substitution, weather-mediated withdrawal, and shifting baselines as dimensions for further inquiry, not population-level findings. The analysis neither equates Canadian and Greenlandic contexts nor treats grief as the only possible response to environmental change. It argues that recognizing distress is insufficient when the relations sustaining wellness remain unprotected, and considers the implications for culturally situated interpretation and care.

Introduction

Weather is often treated in English as metaphor. People feel stormy, cold, gloomy, bright, heavy, or clear. Weather becomes a language for interior life, a convenient vocabulary for moods that otherwise evade ordinary description. Yet this paper begins from the possibility that weather is not only metaphor. In Inuit knowledge contexts, weather, breath, atmosphere, spirit, land, and life may be understood through relationships that exceed the separations built into many Western psychological and climate-science vocabularies. The concept of *Sila* is important here, not as a decorative word for climate, but as a sign that the categories through which climate grief is usually understood may already be too narrow (Leduc, 2007).

This paper asks what happens when climate-related grief is read not only as an individual emotional response but as a disturbance in relation. Inuit climate mental health scholarship connects distress to land-based practice, sea ice travel, harvesting, country food, cultural identity, intergenerational knowledge, and social relationships (Cunsolo Willox et al., 2015; Lebel et al., 2022). These connections are more than pathways through which an external environment affects an internal mind. They also invite consideration of the relations through which wellness is constituted.

The movement from environmental change to mental health outcomes is not analytically neutral. Anxiety, depression, trauma, and suicide risk identify genuine suffering, but their use also organizes explanations and responses. In studies of Canadian Indigenous suicide prevention policies and media, Anderson (2021, 2022) argues that psychocentric representations can acknowledge distress while marginalizing its political, colonial, and material production. Ansloos (2018) similarly questions

individualized explanations of Indigenous suicide. This does not make mental health services inherently inappropriate. Diagnostic recognition can nevertheless coexist with contextual misrecognition, making it necessary to examine what an explanatory framework makes visible and where it locates responsibility.

Ecological grief provides a starting point. Cunsolo and Ellis (2018) describe grief in response to ecological losses, including losses of valued species, ecosystems, and landscapes, as understandable and legitimate. Their framework already attends to environmental knowledge and anticipated loss. The present argument therefore does not claim to introduce relationality into an otherwise uniformly individualistic literature. Rather, it asks what happens when relational evidence is translated into individual outcomes, and how an explicitly relational unit of analysis changes the interpretation of suffering.

Two linked concepts organize the analysis. Relational rupture names the breaking, thinning, or destabilizing of relations among land, weather, sea ice, animals, body, cultural practice, memory, kinship, and future. Psychocentric translation names the process through which that disruption is rendered primarily as an individual psychological outcome. The distinction permits recognition of grief and psychiatric distress without assuming that symptoms exhaust the injury. It also connects the anthropology of experience with the institutional classification of suffering: what relations have been disrupted, whose explanations become authoritative, and which responses become imaginable?

The paper combines an interpretive synthesis with a situated Nuuk case. It asks how Inuit climate grief exceeds individualized framings, how classifications of suffering can obscure relational and structural harm, and what prolonged rainfall and generational climate memory add to existing accounts. The case is not representative evidence for Inuit generally. It brings a locally narrated relation among rain, delayed winter, outdoor life, and mood into dialogue with a literature grounded largely in Canadian Inuit contexts.

Conceptual and Geographical Framing

Place, Sila, and the Limits of Translation

Inuit Nunangat refers to the Inuit homeland in Canada, including the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (n.d.) describes land, water, and ice as integral to Inuit culture and life. Much of the literature considered here concerns Nunatsiavut and other regions of Inuit Nunangat, whereas the embedded case concerns Nuuk, Greenland. Shared circumpolar connections do not make these settings interchangeable. Their languages, histories, governance arrangements, and conditions of land access require distinct treatment.

Place specificity is not only a matter of avoiding geographical overgeneralization. It concerns the social, political, and epistemological conditions through which wellness and distress acquire meaning. Indigenous health and suicidology scholarship cautions that substantial variation among communities is

obscured when Indigenous peoples are treated as a homogeneous population or when one explanatory model is applied across distinct contexts (Ansloos, 2018; Katz et al., 2006). Shared circumpolar experiences therefore do not eliminate differences in governance, colonial history, language, community life, land relations, or the institutional interpretation of distress.

The same distinction applies to Canadian research on the institutional individualization of distress. Findings concerning Canadian media and suicide prevention policy cannot be presumed to describe Greenlandic institutions or Danish-Greenlandic colonial relations. Anderson's (2021, 2022) analyses enter here as conceptual comparators, not as evidence of those institutions' practices. The task is to place the literature and the Nuuk encounter in relation without forcing equivalence.

Sila offers a powerful conceptual opening, but it also requires caution. Leduc (2007) argues that climate research has often translated Sila narrowly as weather, even though ethnographic and Inuit knowledge contexts understand Sila as a more complex concept involving weather, atmosphere, spiritual power, and relational order. In this paper, Sila is not used as a poetic shortcut for climate. Instead, it functions as a methodological warning: climate grief may be misunderstood when Western categories decide in advance what counts as weather, what counts as mind, and what counts as relation.

Interpretive caution therefore concerns more than finding an accurate English equivalent for Sila. It also requires examining the conceptual framework into which the term is translated. Psychological theories are grounded in culturally and historically particular assumptions about personhood, disorder, agency, and the location of distress; these assumptions should not be treated as universally self-evident (Nelson & Wilson, 2017). If Sila is incorporated into a framework that continues to presume an internally bounded individual responding to an external environment, its relational force may be lost even while the term itself is retained. Weather becomes exposure, culture becomes context, and grief becomes an individual outcome. Translation may therefore reproduce the very divisions that Sila has the potential to unsettle.

The title's relational proposition unsettles a one-directional model in which weather acts and people respond. It does not establish what Sila means across Inuit languages or authorize attribution of a shared cosmology to the Nuuk participant. Its role is methodological: to question whether weather must be outside the person, grief inside the person, and culture a contextual addition to both. A relational interpretation remains answerable to the specific language and circumstances of the encounter rather than to the attractiveness of a concept.

Wellness, Recognition, and Relational Injury

A relational understanding of climate grief requires a different concept of health. Richmond and Ross (2009) argue that environmental dispossession is a determinant of First Nation and Inuit health in Canada. Their critical population health approach identifies environmental and cultural connections as inseparable from health determinants such as balance, life control, education, material resources, and social resources. This matters because it prevents the paper from treating land-based distress as merely

emotional reaction to environmental loss. Land and culture are not external variables added onto mental health. They are part of what mental health is.

There is a difference between contextualizing an individual model and reconsidering where wellness resides. An individual framework can recognize land, culture, colonialism, and community as determinants while locating health and intervention primarily within the person. A relational approach instead asks whether disruption to land access, cultural practice, and kinship is itself part of the injury, rather than only a cause of a subsequent symptom (Ansloos, 2018; Nelson & Wilson, 2017). This is an analytical distinction, not a reason to dismiss a person's psychological experience.

Recognition also shapes moral interpretations of illness and responsibility (Rosenberg, 1997). Ecological grief offers an alternative to pathologizing environmental loss, but any category can narrow an account when it becomes detached from the relations and histories through which loss is lived. The argument concerns such uses of categories, not an assertion that every invocation of grief individualizes suffering. Relational rupture keeps the disrupted relations in view; psychocentric translation identifies the interpretive move that can render them secondary.

Kirmayer et al. (2011) likewise argue that resilience must be understood through distinctive cultures, histories of adversity, place-based rootedness, and colonial displacement. Their approach supports attention to continuing agency without converting resilience into an obligation to endure loss. Grief and wellness can coexist, as can adaptation and unresolved injury. The analysis therefore examines relations that remain sustaining as well as those that have become precarious.

Interpretive Approach

Literature and Analytic Procedure

The study uses an interpretive synthesis of scholarly literature on Inuit climate change, mental health, ecological grief, land-based wellness, environmental dispossession, and adaptation. The purpose is not to conduct a systematic review that measures frequency, calculates effect size, or produces an exhaustive map of the field. Instead, the synthesis reads across selected texts to identify conceptual patterns, underlying assumptions, tensions, silences, and possibilities for theory-building. The method is therefore suited to a paper concerned with meaning, framing, and relational interpretation.

Texts were selected for conceptual relevance rather than through an exhaustive database search. The reading brought together ecological grief; Inuit climate-related health and mobility; land-based wellness and environmental dispossession; adaptation and resilience; comparative circumpolar scholarship; and Greenlandic rainfall research. Canadian Inuit studies supply most of the empirical foundation. Sámi, Alaskan, and Greenlandic publications provide comparisons, not substitutes for evidence from Nuuk or

any other particular setting. The climatological studies contextualize precipitation change without validating a participant's precise local chronology.

Analysis proceeded through descriptive reading, focused coding, and memo development. Descriptive coding attended to climate impacts, activities, health meanings, and before/now comparisons. Subsequent comparison considered grief, forms of loss, temporal disruption, mobility, colonial context, and adaptation. Cunsolo and Ellis's (2018) distinction among physical ecological loss, disrupted environmental knowledge, and anticipated future loss served as a heuristic rather than a closed template. Codes were interpretive questions, not frequency measures.

For the Nuuk material, the unit of interpretation was a meaning episode linking weather, memory, activity, and social consequence. Comparison focused on seasonal timing, outdoor practice, mood, and intergenerational knowledge. Case-specific concepts included seasonal substitution, weather-mediated withdrawal, and generational naturalization. Memos distinguished participant perception, researcher interpretation, and literature-supported inference. Passages were considered in narrative context, with attention to tensions rather than forced agreement between the case and the literature.

The Nuuk Encounter and Evidentiary Status

The case draws on two interviews with an Inuit woman in her late 40s, held on separate occasions in a Nuuk restaurant and lasting approximately two hours each. Supplementary conversations involved local youth, several Elders, and predominantly middle-aged adults. These conversations provide context rather than a representative generational sample. Age positions are used to examine differing temporal vantage points, not to assign homogeneous experiences to youth, adults, or Elders.

The narrative is based on interview recollection, reconstructed field notes, and analytic memoing. It is not a transcript-verified account, and no sentence is presented as the participant's verbatim wording. Memory can preserve thematic structure while altering sequence, emphasis, or detail. Statements about mood, young people's routines, and the timing of winter therefore remain attributed perceptions. They are not measurements of depression prevalence, generational behaviour, or Nuuk's climate.

The case functions as an interpretive counterpoint to the published literature, not as a test of population prevalence or a freestanding ethnography of Nuuk. It can illuminate how one account connects seasonal memory, activity, and mood, while exposing the limits of available concepts. Climatological evidence, published qualitative research, participant perception, and researcher interpretation remain distinct forms of knowledge. Disagreement among them is not resolved by treating one account as representative or by presenting memory as an instrumental record.

Relational Rupture Across the Literature

Land, Mobility, and the Conditions of Care

Arctic warming and associated changes to sea ice, permafrost, and hydrology establish the biophysical context of this literature (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2021). They do not, by themselves, explain grief. For Inuit, the significance of change emerges through practices of travelling, harvesting, teaching, feeding families, and sustaining relations with particular places. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's (2019) climate strategy places health alongside food systems, infrastructure, knowledge, and self-determined action. Harper et al. (2015) similarly show that locally identified climate-sensitive health priorities in Nunatsiavut cross physical, emotional, food-related, and environmental domains.

In Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, Cunsolo Willox et al. (2012) connect climate change, place attachment, and health through hunting, fishing, foraging, trapping, travel, and cultural practice. Place is not background scenery: it is part of how people belong, remember, and remain well. Cunsolo Willox, Harper, Edge, et al. (2013) further describe emotional responses to changing land, snow, ice, and weather in relation to culture and self-worth. Read together, these studies suggest that land-based relations function as affective infrastructure, the ordinary arrangements through which solace, identity, and connection are sustained.

Cunsolo Willox, Harper, Ford, et al. (2013) identify multiple pathways linking climate change and mental health, including interrupted land-based activity, reduced place-based solace, family stress, and threats to cultural identity. Their account also discusses possible substance-use consequences, amplification of earlier trauma, and suicidal ideation. These findings do not establish a simple chain in which climate change directly causes suicide or substance use. The more defensible interpretation concerns cumulative pressures and weakened protective relations within existing social and historical conditions.

Petrasek MacDonald et al. (2015) identify being on the land, connecting to Inuit culture, strong communities, family and friendship, and meaningful activity as protective factors for Inuit youth in Nunatsiavut. Climate-related loss therefore includes the weakening of what sustains wellness, not only the emergence of negative emotion. Cunsolo et al. (2020) make a related connection through accounts of caribou decline: an animal relation carries food, identity, memory, and cultural continuity. Ecological loss cannot be reduced to a disappearing object separate from those practices.

Durkalec et al. (2015) show how sea ice use in Nain, Nunatsiavut, supports autonomy and mental, cultural, and social health. Climate change can restrict access to those benefits and alter the meanings of place. Mobility is consequently a condition of relation rather than a purely logistical concern. Safe movement supports harvesting, teaching, visiting cabins, maintaining family ties, and accessing country food. Ford et al. (2019) extend this analysis through changing access to ice, land, and water in Arctic communities.

Ayeb-Karlsson et al. (2024) synthesize Inuit accounts of climate-related immobility around cultural and identity loss, land connection as healing, and environmentally triggered distress. Lebel et al. (2022) similarly identify restricted mobility, livelihood disruption, food insecurity, interpersonal stress, housing,

culture, and identity in their circumpolar review. These syntheses support attention to the relations interrupted by changing access. They do not make every restriction, place, or emotional response equivalent.

Middleton et al. (2021) report associations between meteorological conditions and mental-health-related clinic visits in Nunatsiavut, including patterns relevant to seasonal land, water, and sea ice access. Such findings are compatible with, but do not independently establish, a relational mechanism. Their place-specific results also caution against a uniform Arctic climate-health model. Weather matters through locally organized activities and services, and those relations cannot be inferred from a temperature measure alone.

The land-as-medicine theme also complicates adaptation. If being on the land is protective, then policies that focus only on risk avoidance may unintentionally intensify grief. For example, telling people not to travel because ice is unsafe may reduce immediate danger, but if there are no culturally grounded alternatives for maintaining land connection, wellness may still be harmed. A relational approach to climate mental health would ask how safety, mobility, cultural practice, and land-based healing can be supported together.

Inuit-led monitoring offers a response grounded in those relations. Sawatzky et al. (2020) show why monitoring must engage Inuit-defined well-being and intangible climate losses; Kipp et al. (2019) emphasize community-led, integrated approaches. These initiatives do not dissolve grief into resilience. They demonstrate that communities both experience loss and produce knowledge about how sustaining relations might continue.

Seasonal Time and Interrupted Inheritance

Ostapchuk et al. (2015) foreground Elders' and seniors' understandings of climate-related physical, mental, and emotional health in Rigolet. Knowledge accumulated through observing weather, ice, animals, and travel conditions enables detailed recognition of change. When familiar patterns become less dependable, the difficulty concerns not only current activity but the transferability of knowledge across generations. This does not make Elders' knowledge obsolete. It places greater pressure on the relationship among memory, observation, teaching, and future action.

Temporal disruption connects environmental knowledge loss with anticipated future loss in Cunsolo and Ellis's (2018) framework. Freeze-up, break-up, and seasonal movement organize possibilities for teaching and participation. A season that no longer arrives as expected can unsettle confidence in what may be passed forward. The grief-bearing relation is therefore not simply between a person and a past landscape. It also concerns the future availability of practices through which children and younger adults might learn to belong.

Comparative Sámi scholarship makes threatened inheritance visible without supplying direct evidence about Inuit experience. Venhof et al. (2024) identify family ties, language, cultural pride, traditional practice, and environmental connection alongside pressures to maintain continuity. Markkula et al. (2024) connect ecological grief to reindeer herding, salmon fishing, land-use change, and governance. These accounts suggest that pride in continuity and distress about its conditions can coexist. Neither present wellness nor cultural commitment guarantees that the material conditions for future practice are secure.

Threatened continuity also produces a tension between responsibility and agency. Obligations to teach younger generations, sustain cultural practices, maintain family legacies, and preserve relations with land do not disappear as environmental conditions become less reliable; they may become more urgent. At the same time, the material conditions required to fulfil those obligations may be contracting. People can therefore remain responsible for carrying practices forward while possessing diminishing control over whether those practices remain possible. Anticipated loss is lived in the present through this narrowing field of viable action, not only through worry about a distant future.

Structural Conditions and the Limits of Adaptation

Environmental dispossession situates climate grief within histories of restricted access rather than on neutral ground (Richmond & Ross, 2009). In the literature considered here, changing ice, animals, and travel conditions intersect with earlier disruptions to land, family, governance, and cultural transmission. Lebel et al. (2022) and Ayeb-Karlsson et al. (2024) place climate-related mental health concerns in relation to colonization and intergenerational harm. Relational rupture is thus an account of cumulative disturbance, not a claim that climate change originated every loss.

Structural violence directs attention to arrangements that constrain the conditions of health and meaningful agency (Holmes, 2013). In the present argument, institutional definitions of a problem can form part of those arrangements. If suffering becomes legible primarily through individual symptoms, a response may address consequences while leaving restrictions on land access, resources, or authority intact. This is an interpretive concern about the reach of an explanatory framework; demonstrating that process in a particular institution would require institution-specific evidence.

Adaptation scholarship already provides resources for a broader response. Ford et al. (2008) discuss harvesting, knowledge, social networks, flexibility, and institutional support in Inuit communities. Ford et al. (2014) emphasize the root causes of vulnerability and Inuit knowledge, while Ford and Pearce (2012) argue for methods that engage communities as partners. The critique here is therefore directed at narrow applications of adaptation, not at a field uniformly indifferent to structural conditions.

Adaptation becomes limited when it is equated with behavioural adjustment to harms whose production remains outside affected communities' control. A person may adapt to danger and still grieve; a community may innovate while access, autonomy, or inheritance remain diminished. Read alongside

critical suicidology's questions about responsibility and intervention (Ansloos, 2018; White, 2017), this distinction asks whether greater obligations to cope are matched by greater authority over the conditions producing vulnerability.

Nor should resilience be treated as consolation. Kirmayer et al. (2011) locate resilience in histories, relationships, and cultural continuity rather than an abstract individual trait. Markkula et al. (2024) note tensions when adaptation alters established practices. In a different setting, Hahn et al. (2023) identify the importance of communication, formal and informal care, leadership acknowledgement, and other supports during Southcentral Alaskan wildfires. These are not interchangeable experiences, but together they keep agency connected to the material and institutional conditions that sustain it.

Timlin et al. (2021) further complicate a uniform narrative of Arctic distress. Their Greenlandic research describes nature-based activities as important to wellness, with strong self-rated well-being persisting alongside awareness of environmental and infrastructural change. Relational rupture should therefore remain a question to investigate, not a diagnosis assigned in advance to every Arctic community. Grief, humour, continuity, adaptation, and ordinary pleasure need not cancel one another.

A Situated Nuuk Case: Rain, Winter, and Generational Memory

Rain Occupying the Time of Winter

Across the two Nuuk conversations, the participant returned to the relation among rain, winter, outdoor life, and mood. Her account was organized through comparison: what September had meant, how long drizzle now persisted, when winter seemed to begin, and who remembered the transition most clearly. It was an interpretation grounded in familiarity with local weather and social rhythms, not a meteorological measurement or a statement on behalf of Inuit generally.

The strongest image in the interviews was not simply that Nuuk receives more rain. The participant described rainfall as having nearly replaced winter as a distinct season in the Nuuk area. In her memory, winter had typically begun in September. The arrival of colder conditions, snow, and a recognizable seasonal shift gave September a clearer place within the annual cycle. In the present, she explained, a prolonged period of drizzle can continue through October. Winter does not necessarily disappear, but its onset is interrupted, deferred, and made less dependable.

Describing rain as nearly replacing winter is analytically different from saying that autumn is wetter. It identifies what this analysis calls seasonal substitution: one atmospheric condition expands into the temporal territory formerly occupied by another. Drizzle becomes more than a weather event because it lasts. Its duration erodes the threshold between seasons. Instead of a decisive movement into winter,

the year remains suspended in a wet and unsettled interval. The loss, in this account, is not a single storm, snowfall, or temperature. It is the reliability of seasonal succession.

This distinction suggests how a weather account may carry meanings of loss without explicitly naming grief. A season is also an organizer of anticipation. It tells people when particular forms of movement, clothing, work, harvesting, sociality, and pleasure are likely to become possible. When winter arrives late or arrives through repeated reversals, anticipation becomes harder to anchor. The participant's account makes climate change audible as a problem of timing: not only what the weather is, but whether it arrives when memory says it should.

Greenlandic rainfall research provides context without validating this chronology. Huai et al. (2022) describe a daily rainfall climatology for 1958–2020 and report changes in rainfall amount and seasonal timing, including increasing September rainfall and a shift in the Greenland-wide peak from July to August between the periods examined. Frame et al. (2026) document increasing summer rain-on-snow frequency, extent, and amount over 1940–2023. Neither study establishes when winter began in this participant's Nuuk childhood or how often drizzle now persists through October. Their relevance is to precipitation-phase change, not confirmation of her exact memories.

The participant's account can be read as temporal rupture. Climate change interrupts the sequence through which past observations once oriented present action. September is no longer a stable seasonal marker; October may continue to feel like an extension of wet autumn rather than established winter. A before/now contrast does more than compare two weather regimes. It reveals a fracture between memory and expectation. Knowledge formed through repetition remains meaningful, but the conditions to which it refers become less reliable.

The idea of temporal rupture also prevents the analysis from treating climate change as a string of exceptional events. The participant's concern centered on a slow reorganization of the year. Drizzle continuing into October may not appear dramatic beside a storm, wildfire, or catastrophic ice failure. Its force lies in repetition and duration. A transitional period expands. Winter is repeatedly postponed. The ordinary calendar becomes less trustworthy. This is cumulative disruption at the scale of seasonal expectation.

Outdoor Life, Mood, and Atmospheric Confinement

The participant linked prolonged rain to a reduced willingness among Inuit in Nuuk to engage in outdoor activities. Her emphasis was not only on danger or formal inaccessibility. Rain and drizzle made the outdoors less appealing and, over time, altered the desire to leave home. This suggests weather-mediated withdrawal or atmospheric confinement: the environment remains physically present and may remain technically accessible, but the conditions of engagement become discouraging. The relation to place is thinned by repeated nonparticipation.

This account extends the question of immobility. Much Arctic climate scholarship understandably focuses on unsafe ice, disrupted routes, and material barriers to hunting or travel. The Nuuk case points to a quieter mechanism. People may not be prohibited from going outside, yet prolonged wet weather can reduce walking, visiting, gathering, recreation, and time spent in nature. The distinction matters because mental health is supported not only by the theoretical availability of land but by ordinary, repeated contact with it.

Timlin et al. (2021) found that nature and activities in nature remain important to mental wellness in Greenland. Read alongside that work, the participant's account suggests that persistent rain can interfere with a source of care. The result is not adequately described as inconvenience. When outdoor life contributes to emotional regulation, social connection, cultural continuity, and a sense of belonging, a weather pattern that repeatedly discourages participation can have cumulative affective consequences. Land-based wellness helps explain why drizzle may weigh more heavily than its physical intensity would suggest.

The participant also connected the altered season to general mood. In her account, rain affected willingness to be outdoors and the community's emotional atmosphere. The analysis does not assume that rainfall directly causes depression in a simple exposure-outcome chain. Rather, rain may act through interrupted routines, reduced contact with land, fewer pleasurable activities, social withdrawal, and the unsettling recognition that a familiar season is no longer arriving as expected. Mood is relationally distributed across atmosphere, activity, memory, and place.

Atmospheric confinement is an interpretive term for that account, not an established syndrome or a measured effect of rain. It identifies a distinction between technical access and lived engagement: land can remain physically reachable while repeated wet conditions make familiar activities less inviting. The concept adds affective access to questions usually organized around hazards, blocked routes, or prohibition. It does not imply that discomfort is equivalent to dangerous sea ice or that remaining indoors has the same meaning for everyone.

Different Memories, Uneven Meanings

In the participant's perception, depression among Elders was prevalent and the changed seasonal pattern carried particular weight for older people. This statement is reported as her interpretation, not as epidemiological evidence of prevalence. Its analytic significance lies in the relation she drew between longer seasonal memory, reduced outdoor engagement, and mood. Elders may recognize not only that current conditions are unpleasant but that they represent the erosion of a pattern remembered across much of a lifetime.

Her explanation resonates with Ostapchuk et al.'s (2015) attention to the temporal depth of Elders' environmental knowledge, but the Nuuk account does not independently establish a climate-related disorder or an age-specific risk. Memory may make change more legible while also providing orientation

and continuity. The relationship between remembering, distress, and adaptation cannot be reduced to an assumption that the oldest person necessarily suffers most.

The participant understood youth as partly protected from the worst emotional effects for two reasons. First, she perceived many younger people as more sedentary or more oriented toward indoor routines, which could reduce direct disruption when outdoor conditions deteriorate. Second, depending on age, younger people may have grown up with prolonged rain and delayed winter as their baseline. They do not necessarily experience the same sharp before/now contrast because the altered climate is already woven into childhood normality.

This proposed protection is partial and ambiguous. A sedentary routine may reduce immediate disappointment while also limiting access to land-based protective factors identified by Petrusek MacDonald et al. (2015). Naturalization can soften the felt rupture for an individual while marking a deeper collective loss: a changed climate becomes ordinary before the previous seasonal pattern can be personally remembered. The absence of personal memory does not mean the absence of consequence.

The participant was also clear that teenagers and young adults can discern climate change. They notice unusual events, compare recent years, and learn from parents, grandparents, and other family members how the seasons looked even 10 or 20 years ago. This analysis describes such learning as intergenerational climate literacy. Youth knowledge is assembled through their own observation and through inherited comparison. The altered baseline is therefore not sealed. Family memory punctures it, allowing younger people to understand that what feels normal to them may be historically new.

The supplementary conversations place middle-aged adults at a different temporal vantage point. Their recollections connected changes since the mid-1980s with hunting seasons, country food quality, air quality, and outdoor activity. These contextual accounts do not constitute an independently sampled generational comparison. They suggest questions about how adults remember accumulating changes and relate them to younger people's experience. Elders' longer memories, middle-aged accounts of transition, and young people's inherited comparisons should be investigated as differing perspectives rather than ranked levels of climate awareness.

Read relationally, the participant's account joins seasonal timing, willingness to go outside, mood, and family memory. Rain occupies expected wintertime; altered outdoor routines change opportunities for engagement; and memories shape what is experienced as a departure from the familiar. These connections suggest seasonal substitution and shifting baselines as avenues of inquiry. They do not show how common those experiences are. Youth may inherit changed possibilities without personally remembering their loss, while family accounts can make that altered baseline visible.

The case does not authorize a definitive interpretation of Sila. It does show why separating atmosphere from social life can constrain interpretation: rain enters the calendar, bodily inclination, household routines, remembered September, and conversations across generations. Weather is consequential through those relations. Whether the participant would describe their alteration as grief, adaptation,

frustration, or something else remains a question for further dialogue rather than an answer supplied by the analytic framework.

Discussion: What Recognition Makes Possible

Relational Rupture and Psychocentric Translation

The synthesis brings two analytical tasks into view. The first concerns which relations sustain wellness and how environmental change disturbs them. The second concerns what happens when those disturbances are organized into recognized mental health outcomes. Relational rupture names the injury's relational field; psychocentric translation names an interpretive process that can make that field secondary. The distinction does not oppose psychological reality to social reality. It asks whether an account of symptoms also retains the relations, histories, and constraints through which suffering becomes meaningful.

This contribution is especially important where grief is implicit rather than named. Accounts of unsafe travel, diminished outdoor pleasure, interrupted teaching, or uncertain seasonal timing can identify loss without using a recognized psychological category. They should not automatically be translated into either ecological grief or resilience. The Nuuk narrative illustrates why the speaker's temporal comparisons and explanations matter: its concern is not only unpleasant rain but rain arriving and persisting where remembered winter had organized expectation. Interpretation must preserve that difference without elevating one recollection into a universal climate story.

Anderson's (2021, 2022) work provides a way to ask how institutional recognition might narrow such an account. A focus on an individual's coping could leave seasonal access, cultural continuity, or material constraints peripheral. That is a possibility to examine, not an empirical finding about Greenlandic services from the present case. The methodological limit is productive: an account can question the adequacy of a framework without claiming to have studied the institutions that use it.

Implications for Culturally Situated Care

For clinical interpretation, the argument directs attention beyond whether a person reports a symptom. It also asks what activities and relationships make wellness possible, how those relations have changed, and what forms of response the person regards as meaningful. In a weather-related account, relevant questions might concern the timing of outdoor routines, opportunities for family contact, access to culturally significant places, and what can still be passed to younger generations. These are implications drawn from the synthesis, not a tested assessment protocol or treatment recommendation.

Psychological support and symptom relief can remain valuable within such an account. They need not be treated as substitutes for safe mobility, land connection, cultural practice, or social resources. Conversely, a relational interpretation should not assume that every person wants the same land-based

activity or that cultural connection removes a need for individual care. The literature's place specificity and the Nuuk case's limited reach require responsiveness to the person's own explanation, circumstances, and preferences.

The distinction also changes how adaptation is evaluated. Supporting continued engagement may require attention to access, teaching, community-defined monitoring, and material resources, rather than merely promoting endurance. The question is not whether people can adjust, but which relations adjustment preserves or transforms and who has authority over those conditions. Inuit-led monitoring and resilience scholarship support keeping care connected to such community-defined priorities (Kipp et al., 2019; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Sawatzky et al., 2020).

Limits and Further Inquiry

The targeted literature selection limits coverage, and the preponderance of Canadian Inuit research shapes the conceptual account. Comparative Sámi and Alaskan studies identify questions rather than establish Greenlandic findings. A larger, explicitly documented corpus would help assess competing interpretations, including accounts in which environmental change does not produce grief. The present synthesis develops a conceptual argument; it does not estimate the prevalence or relative strength of climate-related mental health pathways.

The Nuuk material is small, situated, and reconstructed rather than transcript-verified. It supports an interpretation of an encounter, not claims about the prevalence of Elder depression, youth sedentarity, or a uniform seasonal chronology. Researcher memory and theoretical commitments may influence what becomes salient. The analytic concepts remain provisional and require dialogue with the participant and, for wider claims, locally grounded research. Neither climate modelling nor another community's qualitative findings can remove those limitations.

Further inquiry could examine how precipitation duration and seasonal transition shape everyday engagement, how family comparison contributes to climate knowledge, and how local services interpret weather-related accounts of distress. These are questions generated by the case, not procedures completed in this study. Their value would lie in retaining disagreement and place specificity, including differences in whether people describe changed conditions as loss, inconvenience, opportunity, or ordinary life.

Conclusion

Inuit climate mental health scholarship makes visible relations among land, ice, weather, animals, food, movement, kinship, and knowledge that are constitutive of wellness. Relational rupture directs attention to their disturbance. Psychocentric translation asks what may be obscured when that disturbance becomes legible primarily as an individual outcome. Neither concept negates grief or psychiatric distress; together they locate interpretation within the conditions of a life.

The situated Nuuk account sharpens these questions through prolonged rain, uncertain winter onset, outdoor withdrawal, and generational memory. It offers an interpretation to investigate, not a general diagnosis of Inuit experience. An adequate response to climate-related suffering must consider both distress and the relations through which people remain well: what has changed, how that change is understood, what forms of continuity remain possible, and who possesses the resources and authority to respond.

Declarations

Author Contribution

E.G. conceived the study, conducted the fieldwork and interviews in Nuuk, developed the literature synthesis, conducted the qualitative analysis, and prepared the initial manuscript draft. B.A. contributed substantially to the development and refinement of the conceptual framework and analytic focus and contributed to drafting and substantive revision of the manuscript. E.G. and B.A. contributed to the interpretation of the findings and development of the final argument. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

Data Availability

The published sources included in the interpretive synthesis are identified in the reference list. Qualitative material supporting the case analysis is presented in the article as paraphrased accounts. To protect participant privacy and confidentiality, the underlying interview-derived materials, reconstructed field notes, and analytic memos are not available for sharing, either publicly or upon request.

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